

# IOWA BIRD LIFE



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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

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## Fall Meeting of Iowa Ornithologists' Union 1967

ESTHER COPP, SECRETARY PRO-TEM  
WHEATLAND, IOWA

Having an ideal host, ideal weather, and ideal accommodations at Springbrook State Park, Guthrie Center, on September 23-24, 1967, the Iowa Ornithologists' Union thoroughly enjoyed its fall informal meeting. Saturday evening, Mrs. Wayne Partridge, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Tomlin of Altoona and Shirley Bailey of Guthrie Grove Camp served a bountiful picnic supper to 61 registrants. They also prepared the Sunday breakfast, luncheon and cookies. To them and to Mr. Partridge we extend our hearty thanks. Wayne Partridge, Conservation Officer in charge of the Park, as our host welcomed the I.O.U. He introduced two members of the Perry Cameral Club, Lula Dorman and Merle Weigfield, who delighted the audience with a slide program entitled "Nature by Color Camera", Mr. Weigfield narrating. From Hamburg, Iowa, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh Diggs showed excellent color pictures of the "Diggs Domain" with its wealth of plant and bird life.

On Sunday morning hikers birded around the lake, the picnic and camping areas, up a wooded trail and along roadsides. Some visited the Sheeder Prairie Preserve where the Downy Gentians were in bloom. Fifty-seven species were observed. Three additional species were reported seen on Saturday. Jim Clifton of Cedar Rapids acted as compiler.

### BUSINESS MEETING

Myra G. Willis, President, called the business meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. and expressed her pleasure at seeing so many members and friends present. She reminded the group of the spring convention in Ottumwa, May 10-12, 1968. Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Editor, asked for material for the September issue of IOWA BIRD LIFE, which he hopes to have in the printers hands within two weeks. Mrs. Darrell Hanna, of Sioux City Bird Club told about the successful campaign waged by them against spraying the city by helicopter with DDT for control of Dutch Elm Disease. She offered to supply anyone interested with literature and editorials used to convince the city council of the futility of spraying and of its harmful effects (see next article - ed.). The meeting was adjourned by the president.

List of birds seen on the field trip September 24, 1967, Jim Clifton, Compiler. Pied-bellied Grebe, Mallard, Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, American Widgeon, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Coot, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Wood Pewee, Horned Lark, Barn Swallow, Blue Jay, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, House Wren, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, Solitary Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, House Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadow-



lark, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Cardinal, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Swamp Sparrow and Song Sparrow. Additional birds seen September 23, 1967 - Wood Duck, Osprey and Ovenbird. Time: 7:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M., Wind 5 mph; fair and warm; temperature 50 - 73 degrees. Number of species: 57; additional 3 on Saturday.

#### ATTENDANCE

CEDAR FALLS: Mrs. Lloyd Collins, Mrs. Charles Schwanke, Maxine Schwanke, and Mrs. Florence Velle.

CEDAR RAPIDS: Mr. and Mrs. James Clifton, Mr. and Mrs. Beryl Layton, John Layton, Sara Milikin, Lillian Serbousek, and Myra Willis.

DAVENPORT: Mr. and Mrs. Peter Petersen, Jr.

DES MOINES: Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Griffin, Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Pratt

GOLDFIELD: Dean Roosa.

GUTHRIE CENTER: Wayne Partridge.

HAMBURG: Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh Diggs.

JESUP: Mrs. Lloyd Hewitt.

LAMONI: Mrs. Dean Ballantyne.

MARION: Mrs. Lucile Liljedahl.

MARSHALLTOWN: Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Britten, Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rinehart.

OSKALOOSA: Mr. and Mrs. Keith Layton.

OTTUMWA: Judge and Mrs. Charles Ayres, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Donald Johnson and Steve, and Pearl Walker.

PATON: Blanche McWilliams.

PIERSON: Lavina Dragoo.

SHENANDOAH: Mrs. Genevieve DeLong.

SIOUX CITY: Miss Eunise Barrett, Mrs. Helen Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Davidson, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nicholson.

WEST CHESTER: Mrs. Onleta Fisher.

WHEATLAND: C. Esther Copp.

LAMOILLE, MINNESOTA: Pauline Wershofen.

MOLINE, ILLINOIS: Ralph L. Money, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Wichstrom.

No City: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Augustine and children, Ballanger, Binsfield, Mrs. Paul Elswick, Jeff Kern, Trumbo, and Ethel L. Volks.

## Dutch Elm Control

DR. MORGAN WEBB  
Morningside College  
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

The well-publicized program proposed for the fight against dutch elm disease in Sioux City has been followed with great interest and concern by many who appreciate the value of the elm tree to the city and its inhabitants.

Reprinted from The Sioux City Journal, Saturday, Sept. 16, 1967.

A recent announcement of the intention of the city forester, Mr. Naland, to initiate the spray phase of the program this fall has reminded us that although extensive material on the subject has been published locally the adverse effects that appear with the widespread use of many insecticides have received little or no mention. Generally, the articles that have appeared have cited Mr. Naland as the source of information so that this outcome could have been predicted.

It is undoubtedly the primary, if not sole, concern of Mr. Naland to save the elm trees of the city. Thus he could be expected to advocate any method that contributed toward that end.

Each of us, I am sure, would be in favor of taking any measure to preserve our elm trees that is effective, economically feasible, and without extensive adverse effects. With the exception of the spraying technique, the program proposed thus far by the city appears sound and reasonably effective. It is one that I can endorse. Sanitation is simply the prompt removal of a doomed tree before it can contribute to the spread of the disease. Since the dead tree would normally be eventually removed anyway, this should be an evitable cost.

The general spraying of the elm trees in the city as now being proposed as necessary to reduce the annual loss of trees to an acceptable level does not appear wise. In the control program the spraying is designed solely to kill the adult bark beetles that feed briefly on the surface of insecticide-coated trees. The important question that should be raised is, does spraying protect an elm tree from infection? Even the most avid proponents of spraying do not suggest that the feeding beetle would be killed before it had time to infect the tree with spores of the disease.

Thus spraying can not be expected to absolutely prevent the spread of the disease by the vector. At best, it could only retard the process by reducing the number of disease-carrying beetles.

In the series of articles published earlier by The Sioux City Journal, Mr. Naland states that, using all control measures, the loss of elms on public property to the disease should remain constant at about 294 trees each year plus an additional loss of 700 elms per year which would die from other causes. This is a total of about 1,000 trees annually. It was also stated by Mr. Naland that there were about 29,000 elm trees on public property.

This suggests that in about 30 years we should be without any of the present elm trees even though we fully participate in a control program. The worst alternative presented was that if no control is attempted we may stand to lose most of the elms in about 10 years.

We also learn that spraying is proposed on a city-wide basis and as an annual affair. Estimates of the cost of spraying the entire city are around \$30,000 annually. This would be \$300,000 over a 10-year period and \$900,000 if continued for 30 years. Obviously the spraying would have to be continued as long as there were any trees to protect. We have yet to accumulate any real evidence as to the contribution of spraying in the overall control program.

Even if we magnanimously assume that it could cut the annual losses in half, this would be saving of 300 trees each year. But the cost would be \$100 per tree.

#### DANGER IN SIDE EFFECTS

In recent years we have acquired considerable evidence on the adverse effects from the widespread use of some stable and persistent chemicals used as insecticides. Many of the more garish and regrettable results were published in Rachel Carson's book *SILENT SPRING*.

Many side effects are more subtle and delayed and we are presently uncovering a multitude of those. It is beginning to appear that considerable residues of many of the common insecticides are accumulating in many of the areas on earth. Where spraying is periodic and repeated the concentrations in soil and water may rise to a level that is lethal for many organisms, including man, with drastic results. A major problem is how to dispose of these unwanted and dangerous residues, many of them in the bodies of organisms.

For dutch elm disease effective spraying must take place when the leaves are off the tree since it is the twigs and branches that must be coated. Aerial spraying of a defoliated tree will place most of the insecticide on the ground beneath since only a very small part of the spray material would be intercepted by the bare tree. It is obvious that a level of insecticide sufficient to help control the beetle will result in substantial accumulations of active insecticide on and in the soil as well as the bodies of water served by the watershed, levels which will probably be excessive within a few years. Experience has already amply demonstrated that we may then expect a substantial and annual loss of birds, fish, and other wild-life as well as of beneficial insects, and even domestic livestock and pets.

We are well aware that spraying is a practice that has been recommended for years in the control of dutch elm disease by entomologists, plant pathologist, and foresters. I know from experience that the use of insecticide is the standard recommendation of most entomologists. It will certainly kill substantial numbers of the bark beetle, at least, until said beetle develops a resistant strain. For those interested solely in killing beetles, saving elm trees, or selling insecticide spraying is a logical procedure.

The insecticide recommended for use in Sioux City is DDT, one of the first of the chlorinated hydrocarbons to be utilized. DDT is known to be effective against the bark beetle and is relatively cheap in cost. DDT is cheap because it has fallen into general disuse as an insecticide. Many of the insects against which it was originally effective have developed resistant strains. Much of the adverse side effects recognized were demonstrated first by DDT because it was so generally, frequently, and unwisely applied.

DDT has been amply demonstrated to be a persistent and cumulative poison to many forms of life. We know that other insecticides are less persistent and harmful but these are more expensive to use. The entomologist's dream is to develop an insecticide that would kill only certain insects but not harm any other living thing - but that is a forlorn hope.



I have briefly presented a number of considerations that seriously question the advisability of using insecticide in a program to control dutch elm disease on a city-wide basis. These considerations are well substantiated by research and experience and cannot be denied. I strongly object as a taxpayer to having money spent in the expensive practice of spraying if it can only at best delay for a few years the infection of the elms of Sioux City. I object equally strenuously as a biologist to the general application of annual quantities of a chemical agent proven to be seriously harmful to wildlife, livestock and man.

I would recommend that the funds that would be used for spraying be utilized instead in other aspects of the control program. I believe that we would derive the most benefit from a vigorous and thorough sanitation program. This is money that we would have to spend anyway.

The bark beetle is able to utilize only dying trees for rearing its immature stages. The removal of much of the suitable breeding timber in the area is the most effective way of keeping the numbers of the beetle at minimal levels. If optimal sanitation could be achieved it is doubtful that spraying would add significant benefit in the control of the beetle.

It would also be prudent to recognize that no matter how vigorously Sioux City pursues a control program we can expect continual influx of beetle and disease from surrounding areas. If we are interested in extending the life of the elm trees in the city we should consider combatting both disease and beetle in a peripheral zone around the city as well as within. The removal of only the diseased trees from such a zone should drastically reduce the number of disease-carrying beetles that would invade the city, and the others are relatively harmless.

It would also be well to remember that unless some major break-through occurs to assist in killing the fungus and the beetle that the elms will largely disappear in spite of our best efforts, and the cost of replacement trees will be required. The hope for such a timely aid is very remote, we have been searching for years already.

Above all let us not participate in an expensive and futile spray program that will inevitably result in far more harm than good. However, if it is decreed that we endure the spray is it reasonable to spray now when the beetle population is low? The value of spraying is proportional to the numbers of the beetle. Why spray wide areas just to insure the coverage of a small area in which beetles are present? I would consider spraying as a last resort to help stem the spread of the disease under epidemic conditions, but that it is completely unwarranted under the present levels of incidence of the beetle and the disease.

Finally, in desperation, if spraying is to be undertaken now, I would plead that a less dangerous chemical agent be substituted for DDT in spite of the increased expense.

## Field Reports

May was a cold month with an average daily temperature deficiency at 3.5 at the Des Moines Airport, and rather dry with 80% of the month's rain falling after the 26th. High winds prevailed. Eldon Bryant estimates 50% of the nests in his area were damaged or destroyed, and eggs were chilled in May. His comment on the nesting season was "Disastrous." June was also cold but wet; Des Moines had 7.4" of rain. July was dry with little rain until the last week, and the month was unusually cool.

**GREBES, CORMORANTS, HERONS.** There were numerous Pied-billed Grebes on W. Twin Lake late in July, some with young being carried on the parents' backs. Cormorants were breeding north of Clinton with 65 being counted. This figure includes young, (N. Ward, fide PP). There was no mention of herons. Few have been seen in Polk Co. with no report of Yellow-crowned Night Herons which have nested in recent years.

**DUCKS.** Wood Ducks are seemingly continuing to increase. More than usual have been observed in Polk Co. A Ruddy was seen in mid-July at Lock 15 by Larry Dau, (PP). A small flock was on W. Twin Lake on the 23 of July.

**HAWKS.** This has not been a good breeding year for Red-tails in Scott and Muscatine Co., where fewer than usual have been seen (PP), but 4 nests in the township appear successful, (GB). There has been no mention of Red-shouldered. Swainson's failed to nest near Plainview where they nested in two previous seasons, (PP). There were 3 in one field all day on 12 of May with several later observations but no nesting observed, (DG). Only one pair of Sparrow Hawks has been observed nesting, but they were successful, (GB).

**BOBWHITE, PHEASANTS.** Bobwhites have been plentiful with good hatches, (GB), and are the most abundant in 20 years, being seen and heard on every farm, (DG). Pheasants are in all parts of the township with 11 or 12 young seen with each hen, (GB).

**SHOREBIRDS.** Killdeers are very scarce, (GB), but are beginning to appear in numbers in Polk Co. A Woodcock was flushed on 20 and 21 June, (DG); one was seen 6 July in Jester Park; and a nest near Tipton in the first week of June was deserted, (PP). There are an encouraging number of reports of Upland Plovers: the population in north Scott Co. is "strong", (L. Blevins, fide PP); 1 observed on 16 July, (FK); 2 on 9 July near Des Moines; 1 pair reported but none seen in the usual places, (GB); 1 seen, apparently a summer resident, (EB); and, the usual number in several different locations, (DG).

**GULLS, TERNS.** There were 4 straggler Ring-billed Gulls on the Mississippi at LeClaire on June 20, (PP). Black Terns are numerous at Goose and E. Twin Lakes, and there have been several sightings in Polk Co.

**DOVES, CUCKOOS.** Doves may be fewer with smaller numbers of nests located, (GB), but, plentiful as usual, (MK). Reports on cuckoos are varied:



almost non-existent with only one Black-billed heard, (GB); both below normal, (PP); late in arriving and very few, (FK); first not seen until 22 June but both observed frequently, (MK); Yellow-billed heard regularly after 8 June, but no Black-billed, (PL); Yellow-billed heard regularly, but 2 Black-billed on 3 June were the only ones seen or heard, (WHB); only one Black-billed, (DH). There appears to be a smaller number of "measuring worms" and this might affect the cuckoo population.

OWLS. A nest of Barn Owls was found in Davenport, and 3 young banded on 29 June, (PP). Only one nest with one young has been located, but Great Horned have been heard in several areas. (GB), and one young banded in Davenport on 14 April, (PP). A Saw-whet was found on the late date 11 July near Sharon in the Iowa City area, (Roy Coy, fide FK).

NIGHTHAWKS, SWIFTS, HUMMINGBIRDS, KINGFISHERS. There appears to be only one pair of Nighthawks nesting, (GB). Chimney Swifts are about the same as last year but not as plentiful as five years ago, (GB). Hummingbirds are: scarce (DH); none seen since migration, (GB). One of the few Des Moines observations was one of 5 seen by Albert Berkowitz in a Buckeye tree. Kingfishers are scarce, (DH, WHB).

WOODPECKERS, FLYCATCHERS. Flickers are plentiful, (GB). The Red-head population is up, (FK); numerous along back roads, (WHB); seen throughout the township with dead Elms possibly a factor, (GB); seen more often than five years ago and increasing, (DG). Western Kingbirds are scarce, (DH). Traill's: breeding in good numbers in northern Scott Co., (L. Blevins, fide PP), but appear few in Polk. Say's Phoebe are again at Akron.

SWALLOWS, CHICKADEES, NUTHATCHES, WRENS. Tree Swallows have been around all summer with as many as 100 at Swan Lake, (FK). Nesting Barn Swallows are down at almost every barn checked, (GB), but are thought plentiful, (MK). Cliff Swallows are occupying 49 nests under the bridge where they were found last year, (GB), and a colony under a bridge also, (MK). Martins: fewer pairs, (GB); up slightly but not in usual numbers, (MK); and not as many as two years ago in Polk Co. Chickadees had a poor nesting season due to predation, (GB). Nuthatches are few and far between, (GB). House Wrens are down with only about half as many banded as last year, (GB). Carolina, reported twice: 1 netted at Wildcat Den on 17 June, (PP), and 1 heard, (PL). Short-billed Marsh Wrens showed up as usual in July with none found in May and June, (FK).

MIMICS, THRUSHES, SHRIKES. The only Mockingbird nest found was lost due to predation, (GB). Catbirds are scarce, (DH), and not plentiful, (GB). Thrashers are also scarce, (DH), but thought abundant, (GB). Robins are fewer than usual, (PK), and the same or fewer, (GB), while the later broods seemed more successful than the earlier ones, (WHB). Bluebirds: Harrison Moore of Mt. Pleasant reports numerous sets of 6 and more raising all 6, (PL). They are very scarce, (MK, DH), and fewer than 50% of the number banded in 1966 because of fewer boxes occupied and rate of predation high. However several pairs were seen nesting in woodpecker holes in elm trees, (GB). Shrikes: down, (L. Blevins, PP, FK, WHB).

**VIREOS, WARBLERS.** Vireos are almost non-existent with only 2 pairs of Bell's, (GB), and all species seem down in Des Moines. Red-eyed; only 1 record, (DH); down considerably and Warbling conspicuous by its absence, (MK). An attempted nesting near Des Moines by a pair of Prothonotary Warblers failed when the June rains caused the water to rise above the nesting hole. A territorial Blue-winged Warbler seen and heard on 17 June, (PP). Yellow, again very scarce, (WHB). A Blackpoll was well seen on 9 June, (PL). Yellow-throat, abundant, (GB, MK, WHB). Chat, none located, (GB, WHB). Redstart, scarce, (DH), and almost none summering after a heavy migration, (WHB).

**HOUSE SPARROWS, ICTERIDS, TANAGERS.** House Sparrows are down at many farms without any trapping or poisoning, (GB). Meadowlarks are abundant but Redwinged not as plentiful, (GB). There have been several late nestings of Grackles with young leaving the nest as late as 21 July, (PL). They continue to increase in Des Moines. Tanagers are late and very few, (FK). Scarlet Tanager, reported once but no nest found, (WHB). The only mentions of the Summer Tanager: 1 each, (DH, PL). A pair came to a feeder in Des Moines early in the summer for a short time only, and no nest was located.

**FINCHES, SPARROWS.** Cardinals, previously plentiful in towns, are extending into farm areas, (EB). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, more than usual, (HM), and numerous, (GB). Blue Grosbeak nested in Akron, (DH). Indigo Buntings: plentiful, but not more than last year, (MK), more than usual, (HM, WHB), fairly numerous, (GB). Dickcissels, abundant, (GB, WHB). Goldfinches: up, (FK): a good year and more numerous than House Sparrows, (MK). Savannah Sparrows were seen 2 July and a number of times later, and apparently nesting, (MK). Grasshopper Sparrows seem to have had a very good year, (PP). Swamp Sparrows: many heard singing on 20 July and thought nesting, (MK).

**Contributors:** Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Eldon Bryant, Akron; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Milford Keeler, Mason City; Fred Kent, Iowa City; Pearl Knopp, Marble Rock; Peter Lowther, Burlington; Howard McKinley, Russell; Peter Petersen, Jr., Davenport. Woodward H. Brown, 4815 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 50312.

## General Notes

**MY LAST BLUE-HEADED VIREO**--The lovely perse color which mantles the head and neck of this vireo has always made it one of my favorite birds. Together with a pair of white spectacles and white eye-rings and set off with a pure-white throat and you have a vireo unlike any of the others. The name Solitary, which has been tacked on to a beautifully named bird is hardly more fitting than it would be on any of the other vireos.

Mid-May is the time to expect the Blue-headed Vireo in the Upper Missouri River Valley. His fine rolling song stands out from the other vireo songs even if you don't see his handsome appearance at once. While some years favorable winds push this vireo north at a faster pace and one might see one as early as May 7th, the average arrival date would be a few days later.

In the fall the first migrants arrive during mid-September, but this year 1966, the first ones arrived on September 7, which incidentally broke my earliest previous fall arrival date by one day. Some linger to feed during early October, but most of them have departed for the south by then. Mrs. D. M. Hanna of Sioux City gave me a fine late record on this vireo for October 10, 1956. My own last record for this bird was on October 15, 1964.

A few Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos were about the yard on September 7 and I was watching them, suddenly a Blue-headed Vireo flew in and began feeding in a crab apple tree a few feet above my head. Then almost at once I noticed a second Blue-headed Vireo feeding in our apple tree nearby. I watched these two birds off and on for several hours, as they fed and bathed in the yard. It was like a breath of spring in the fall, as the vireos were in wonderful plumage and their presence was a real joy to one, who probably would never see another spring.

While I did see another Blue-headed Vireo on September 11th, it was not observed like the first two were, and that is why I stretch the point and say my last Blue-headed Vireo. To one, who has devoted his entire lifetime to the study of birds there comes a time when the sight of a favorite bird species brings him peace and he is ready to journey to Valhalla and join his friends in bird-watching, namely T. C. Stephens, Paul Errington, Fred M. Dille, Myron Swenk, Walter W. Bennett and many others. -- WILLIAM YOUNG WORTH, 3119 E. 2nd St., Sioux City. (The final note of probably our most loyal contributor for 36 years.)

OBSERVATIONS OF RED-TAILED HAWKS IN PLYMOUTH COUNTY--  
Red-tailed Hawks have nested in cotton wood trees near my home almost every year since 1954. Most nests have been a few hundred yards or less from the house giving opportunity to observe the hawks at all seasons. The Red-tails apparently move southward during very cold winters but the first January thaw will bring them back. Their wild cry of kree-e-e-e-e heard from high in the air heralds this return and nest repair or building begins at once. This work is done by the female with the male observing from nearby. Except for some dry inner bark or corn leaves for lining the nest is made of twigs which are eight to eighteen inches long. Most of these twigs are selected from standing cottonwoods. She will snap them off with her beak with and assistance of some wing flapping if necessary. These are carried to the nest in her beak where she will usually circle the area at low level and rise abruptly to the nest to place the small branch. This rapid climb is done with no apparent wing movement and may be simply a braking process but may also make the nest location approach less noticeable. Several minutes will be spent arranging each stick this way and that until she is satisfied. I have never seen the female pick sticks from the ground but have seen her carry branches from a distance which appeared to have been too large to snap off with her beak. These may have been picked up somewhere.

The nests are usually built as high as possible in what are very much exposed locations until the new leaves arrive to shade and hide them. A new nest is very vulnerable to wind damage and it is not all unusual for the female to have to rebuild two or three times. If a nest survives a few months it seems to



"set" to the tree and does not dislodge easily. The nest at the present site blew down twice the first year. I found remains of eggs the second time and noting no more activity felt nesting was over for the year for that pair. When leaves fell that fall it was plain to see how wrong I was. A nest was firmly anchored to that same spot and has been used every year since. New material is added each year.

Brooding will begin anytime after the second week of March depending on the weather. I would like to say the male helps a bit with this but can't be sure. One would have to spend long hours watching to determine this or if the male brings food to his mate and am sorry to say I am not that patient. The nests are placed so high I have seldom been able to see young wings being stretched and exercised but am not confident they are successful each year. I have noted that nest building takes place early in the early morning for an hour or two only. The female will then rest or dress her feathers. The male will frequently join her at this time and they will sit side by side for long periods. I watch the female as she rested from nest building one day when a red squirrel slowly approached her on the branch. I seemed as if he was playing an "I dare you" game and finally approached to within four feet of the hawk. The big bird never moved but kept her eyes firmly fixed on the little rascal until he decided to leave. The result might have been different if the squirrel had been on the ground below.

I have never been able to see these hawks make a kill or bring food to the nest. I did find one nest in another area in a climbable box elder. This nest held three young just sprouting wing feathers and had parts of cotton tail rabbit and thirteen lined ground squirrel for lunch. I have noted they will feed on carrion and especially favor dead chickens which farmers have carried to the field and left on the ground. I did see a melanistic Red-tail which had eaten so much from a chicken found along the road that its crop protruded like a grapefruit and the bird actually had trouble getting air borne. I have never known any instance of their taking live poultry. I have seen them hopping and flopping along the ground trying to catch grasshoppers slowed by cold weather. This is a performance ridiculous indeed.--ELDON BRYANT, R.R. 1, Akron.

## Book Reviews

THE BOOK OF THE AMERICAN WOODCOCK--William G. Sheldon--University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, Mass.--227 p., 1 color plate, many photos, charts, maps, and sketches--1967--\$8.50.

A very complete, readable life history of a very interesting bird. The author has done extensive field research on this species. In addition to the usual facets of life history he discusses trapping and netting techniques, methods of sexing and aging, population dynamics, hunting and management. One is impressed by the author's ability to convey so much information without the necessity of being extremely wordy and overstressing areas of his special interest.

This should serve as a good model for other workers who plan to produce life history monographs of interest to a wide, diverse readership. Banders, serious amateur bird students, hunters and wildlife management personnel would especially enjoy this volume, ed.

THE SHOREBIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA--Gardner D. Stout, Editor; text by Peter Matthiessen; paintings by Robert Verity Clem; species accounts by Ralph S. Palmer--Viking Press, N.Y.--Folio size, 14-1/4 x 10-1/4, 270 pp., 32 colored plates--1967--\$22.50.

One might say that this is a portfolio of beautiful colored plates with an accompanying text to hold it together as a book. Certainly the plates stand out immediately as one opens the volume. They bring a new dimension and clarity to bird paintings the like of which we have not seen in other books. A new name among bird artists, Mr. Clem's technique in painting has achieved an early maturity that puts him in the front ranks.

Each plate is a lovely picture in which the shorebirds assigned to it are depicted in perfect light and shading. Such components of the picture as pebbles on the beach and flowers in the field are done with almost photographic detail. The effect is startling, as if we are looking at the birds and the landscape with powerful binoculars. Probably the shorebirds will never be portrayed in greater depth or by a more sympathetic artist. In other books the shorebirds are often grouped by families on the same plate. Mr. Clem groups them as ecological companions, as the different species would be actually found together in any given habitat. The 32 paintings were done in opaque water color and are reproduced by six-color lithography, with printing done in Switzerland.

The part of the book called the "Text" is by Peter Matthiessen and covers eleven chapters (68 pages). In this section the author gives a general discussion of the shorebird groups, beginning with early America when shorebirds migrated by millions and were slaughtered without mercy by gunners. After many years of systematic shooting, drastically reduced numbers of many species became apparent. In the present day the migration habits and long-distance flights of shorebirds make absorbing reading. Courtship display, mating, nesting, and development of the young are hardly less interesting and are taken up in turn, to carry the reader along with keen enthusiasm.

In preparing his text the author draws on his own experiences in studying the shorebird groups in various parts of the world. In this a deep affection for his subject can be discerned. Shorebirds are his favorites. To them he has devoted many years of painstaking research. His chapters, although somewhat in essay form, have great literary quality and vivid word pictures stand out in the text. Matthiessen journeyed to the Yukon and the Arctic coast to see the shorebirds' breeding grounds, and he has also observed them in their wintering grounds in South America.

The semi-technical portion of the book (80 pages) was furnished by Dr. Ralph S. Palmer. He gives sizes and complete plumage descriptions for the 75 species of shorebirds which occur in North America, as well as paragraphs on behavior afield, voice, habitat, distribution, migration, breeding, and habits.

This section is longer than Matthiessen's contribution and is the one to which the bird student will turn for help in identifying shorebirds that he has seen or heard in the field. The bibliography is brief, sketchy, and refers mostly to items that Matthiessen mentions in his text.

We note -- somewhat reluctantly -- that the name of the Upland Plover has been changed again. Old-timers knew the bird as Bartramian Sandpiper -- up until the Third Edition of the A.O.U. Check-List in 1910, when the name was officially changed to Upland Plover. This name has been retained through the current Fifth Edition of the Check-List (1961). The new shorebird book calls it the Upland Sandpiper, though the scientific name (*Bartramia longicauda*) remains the same.

Paper, printing and binding are excellent, as would be expected in a book of this price. As a gift book and as a showpiece for the library table, it will be in a class by itself. --F. J. Pierce.

BIRDS OF THE SUN--Michael Sharland--Angus and Robertson Ltd., Sidney, Australia and Tri-Ocean Books, San Francisco--182 p. 33 photographs --1967--\$5.95.

Anyone interested in Australian birdlife will discover that this book will serve as a good introduction. The author has spent many years studying Australian birds and describes many encounters with species quite different from American birds. He attended the recent A.O.U. meeting in Toronto and was a most interesting and friendly individual. -- ed.

THE BIRDER'S GUIDE TO BIRD GUIDES--Malcolm J. Ruhl, Andover, Mass.--20 p. --1967--paperbound--\$1.50.

This booklet is a listing of page numbers of eleven field guides by species in A.O.U. order. It also includes an alphabetical index. The guides included are Peterson, Pough, Collins, Chapman (Handbook), Wetmore (Geographic books), Saunders (Bird Songs), Forbush and May, Robbins, Bruun and Zim, and Blackly and Jenks. Both text and illustration references are given. This would seem to be primarily (as the author indicates) of use to occasional or novice bird watchers. It is an interesting idea and may be quite helpful for some. ed.

FRANK M. CHAPMAN IN FLORIDA, HIS JOURNALS AND LETTERS--Ed. by Elizabeth S. Austin--University of Florida Press, Gainesville, Florida--228 p., 12 photographs, 1 map--1967--\$7.95.

Chapman spent much of his youth in Florida about eighty years ago. These previously unpublished journals and letters give a broad insight of the Gainesville area in particular. Included in this book is a complete bibliography of Chapman's published writings and a chapter on the birds of the Gainesville Region by Oliver Austin, Jr. Any reader with an interest in historical material will certainly enjoy this book. ed.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE PURPLE MARTIN--J. L. Wade-Griggsville Wild Bird Society, Griggsville, Illinois--218 p., many photographs --1967--\$4.95.



This book, written by the President of the Trio Manufacturing Co., producers of Purple Martin houses, will probably enjoy a wide sale to the general public due to good promotion and advertising. This is most unfortunate as it is not what one would call "authoritatively written." While there is no doubt the author has read many references there can be no excuse for some of the misleading statements. The prime example is "A Purple Martin will eat 2,000 mosquitos per day." This statement is based on the author's "Studies", not detailed. No study of stomach contents of Purple Martins has ever shown mosquitos to make up more than a small part of their diet. The size and habits of a mosquito, being active at dawn and dusk, staying low and near vegetation would not make it a good food item for Purple Martins. Therefore, this much repeated claim of the martin as an important factor in mosquito control is grossly exaggerated. Another example of this is the statement on page 143 that Parathion, and most insecticides, has a cumulative effect. This material is one of the organic phosphorus insecticides which are removed by normal excretion processes and are not cumulative like chlorinated hydrocarbons. (CLINICAL HANDBOOK ON ECONOMIC POISONS--U. S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare--1963).

In addition to the previously mentioned errors many more careless statements, quotes from newspaper articles, and testimonials from laymen detract from the book. Also, the entire first half consists primarily of what has been done to promote martins and Trio martin houses. Much of the second half of the book is quite factual material, but the layman would not be able to separate fact from fantasy, so the book cannot be recommended more than to say examine it first--carefully. ed.

THE BIRD BREEDING SURVEY--1966--Chandler S. Robbins and Willet Van Velzen--Migratory Bird Population Station, Division of Wildlife Research, Patuxant Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland--43 p., many maps and tables--1967--paperbound--free.

A summary of the results of the bird breeding survey for 1966 covering all states east of the Mississippi River. The purpose is to measure changes in the abundance of North American birds by covering randomly selected 25 mile routes with 50-three minute stops. Iowans who helped with the survey in 1967 or may wish to help in 1968, when we hope to improve on our 50% coverage, will get a full picture of the value of this survey. ed.

THE LIFE OF THE SEASHORE--William H. Amos--McGraw Hill, New York--231 p., 117 color photographs, 35 black - and - white photographs and 90 line drawings--1966--\$4.95.

One of McGraw Hill's series on the various communities of nature produced with the cooperation of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. Stress is placed on the basic principles of ecology with many examples included. Mention of birds is scattered throughout the text. Although we in Iowa are far from the seashore many members journey to the coast and find the diverse and different avian community challenge their ability. This volume and the entire series should be in every high school library. ed.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS -- 1967

Dates for Christmas bird counts in Iowa for inclusion in IOWA BIRD LIFE are December 22, 1967 through January 2, 1968. Counts must be at least eight hours in length, be submitted typed on I.O.U. forms by January 10, 1968, detail all unusual records and cover an area no larger than a fifteen mile diameter circle. Forms will be sent to all compilers of 1966 counts and anyone else requesting one. Counts should be submitted to the editor.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

PETER PETERSEN, JR., Editor